

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Onion-Rawl House

AND/OR COMMON
None**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

11314 Reynolds Road

5th Councilmanic District

CITY, TOWN

Bradshaw

VICINITY OF 2nd

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Maryland 21021

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Allen C. Rawl et al.

Telephone #: 592-2170

STREET & NUMBER

11314 Reynolds Road

CITY, TOWN

Bradshaw

VICINITY OF

Maryland 21021

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

Liber #: SM 8134

Folio #: 548

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson,

Maryland 21204

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

MHT Inventory

DATE

1964--and continuing

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

21 State Circle

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

Maryland 21401

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

BA-360

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The "Onion-RAWL House" is an L-shaped structure, with a five-bay Federal main block tacked onto a smaller and more primitive frame and clapboard section. Measurements taken in 1983 suggest that the rear wing is a close match to a small frame house of William Onion's that was "not quite finished" when the tax assessor visited Onion's Inheritance in 1798.

The rear wing is frame and clapboard with a large primitive fireplace at the rear outside wall; the fireplace is adjoined by a closet with a vertical board door and a small compact staircase is packed into the space between the fireplace surface and the rear wall of the house. The ceiling in the kitchen contains exposed squared wooden beams overhead.

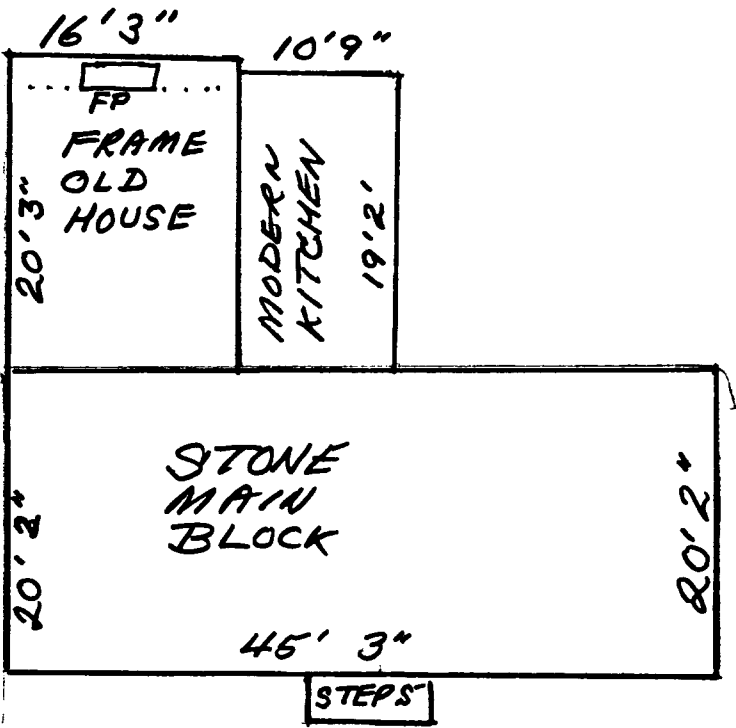
The old kitchen stairs lead into a low-ceilinged second story where there is another fireplace using the same inside end-chimney. The second-story bedroom has a plastered ceiling that is almost barrel vaulted in form. The rear wall of the rear wing is blank at both levels, two bays long on the west side.

The main block is a severely plain but well balanced stone house in the Federal style but apparently built with Quaker taste and restraint. There is a paneled center door set in a paneled frame which opens onto a small one-bay brick porch. The main door is topped by a transom. The door and the window frames are topped by flat arches of brick. Some markings on the stones of the main facade suggest that there could have been a one-bay entrance portico.

The basement of the house contains log joists still carrying the original tree bark.

The roof of the main block is punctuated in front by two gable-roofed dormers. Roofing material is cedar shake, the present owner having replaced older plain wood shingles. The east end of the stone block is blank except for two square attic windows. The west end of the main block has a bay of windows serving the rear rooms and also the same sort of square attic windows.

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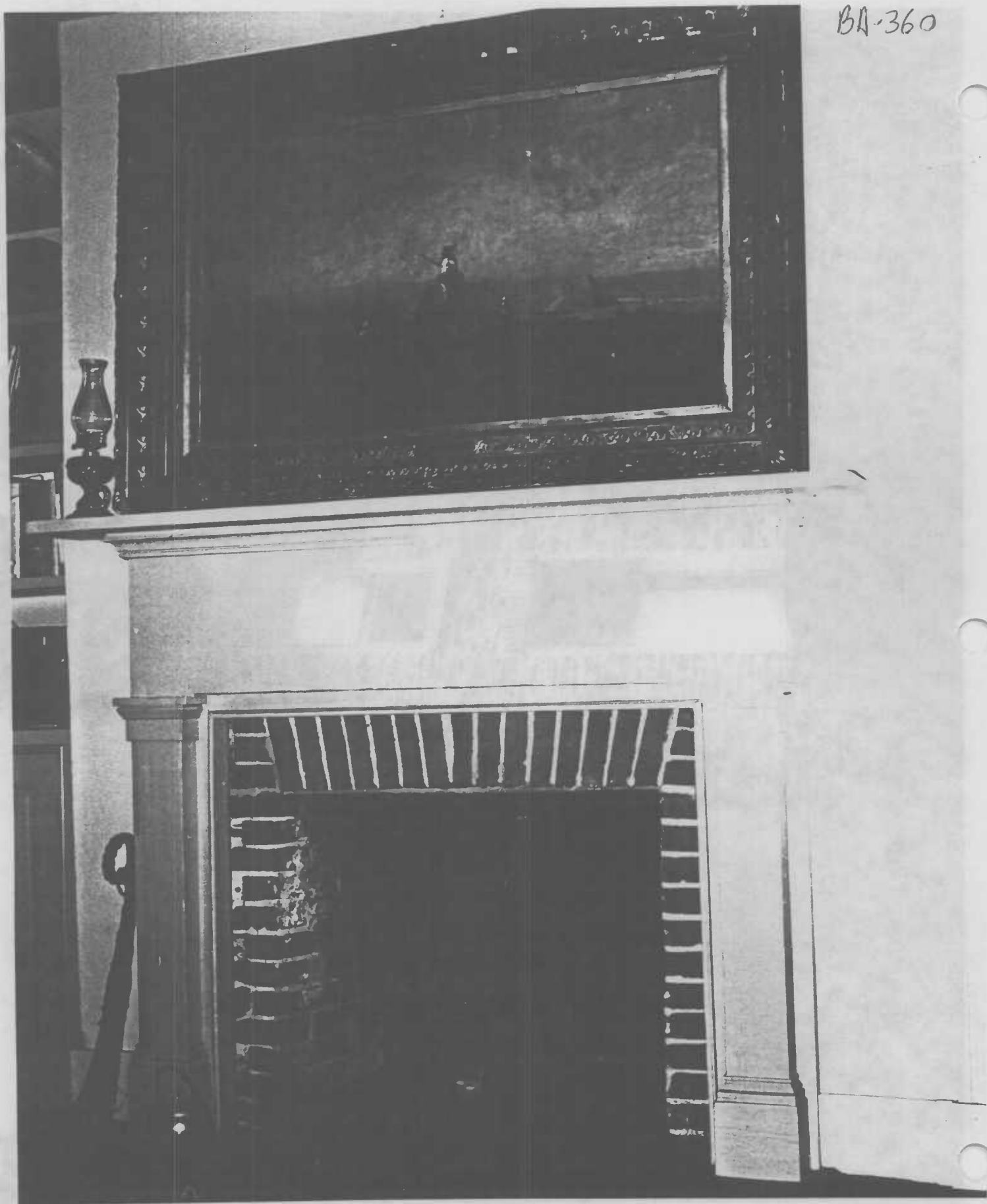
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PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES
BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Frame 1798 (?); Stone 1823-1833
Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Onion-Rawl House stands on the remnant of a tract resurveyed for the British ironmaster Stephen Onion (1694-1754). The house consists of a large stone front section that cannot be found in the 1798 tax list and a small frame rear wing 16 by 19 feet, probably of 18th century origin. The older part of the house is a compact dwelling with a narrow stairway crammed into the space next to the kitchen fireplace. The small wing would make a self-contained home for a farm family and a house of almost those dimensions is found in the 1798 tax list of Gunpowder Upper Hundred, a one-and-a-half story structure of frame and log charged to William Onion; that house was "not quite finished" in the words of the assessor. The same assessor found another structure, log, one-and-a-half stories, 20 by 16 feet. (1)

Stephen Onion came to Maryland from Brewood or Braywood, Staffordshire, to manage the Baltimore Iron Works on Gwynns Falls. (2). In 1743, he went into business for himself on the Little Gunpowder Falls where present Maryland Route 7 crosses into Harford County. He had been acquiring land by both purchase and patent in that neighborhood from 1731 onwards. (3) By 1746, he was producing iron. (4) The 1749 papers reported that one of his forges was swept away in a flood. (5) When Onion died in 1754, the Annapolis paper described him as a man of "plentiful fortune". He owned portions of 52 different tracts and lots in both Baltimore and Joppa Town. (6) Onion left all his property to his nephew Zacheus Barrett, provided Barrett take Onion as his last name, which he did. (7) The ironmaster's main house was probably near the furnace and mill complex on the Harford County side of the Little Gunpowder Falls at the head of tidewater navigation. The furnace complex contained seven dwellings as revealed by an advertisement in 1769. (8)

The house of interest to this study stands on part of a large survey called "Expectation" that was later resurveyed into "Fortune". Presumably the title to the property had lapsed twice, because Stephen Onion was able to have "Fortune" and some other tracts resurveyed into "Onion's Inheritance in 1745. (9)

Following the death of Zacheus Barrett Onion, his executors Stephen Onion (Jr.) and the widow Hannah Onion advertised the mill and furnace properties for sale in the Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser in 1782 but the family retained the site on Reynolds Road; its location was 0.8 mile from the ironworks. (11)

The 1783 tax list of Gunpowder Upper Hundred showed Hannah Onion with no taxable improvements on a 444-acre tract of land. (12) The 1798 tax list is usually very informative, but in Gunpowder Upper Hundred and Mine Run Hundred the assessor neglected to record the tract names as was done by most other assessors in other neighborhoods. As mentioned before, two small houses were charged to William Onion in 1798; his total ownership was 250 acres. (12)

The even less informative assessment books for 1813, 1819, and 1823 showed Elizabeth Onion with 260 acres of "Onion's Inheritance" on which the improvements were assessed at \$30, \$50, and \$33, respectively, hardly enough to account for a large stone house. But in the 1833 tax list ledger, the improvements were worth \$400. (13)

Elizabeth Onion died in 1839 at age 69 and left much of her property to her son John Watson Onion; the house and ten acres were to go to her daughter Maria Kennard. (14) Mrs. Onion was rather prosperous and her will mentioned a number of slaves, a carriage, a large looking-glass, furniture in "the dining room", a silver ladle and her "dwelling house" and orchard, also stocks and bank deposits.

J.C. Sidney's 1850 map of the county showed John W. Onion as owner or resident of this house.

There were a number of inter-family deeds. In 1864, Thomas Gorsuch, Sr., conveyed his interest in an 84-acre part of the Elizabeth Onion land to Mary M. Onion for \$2,400. (15)

John W. and Mary M. Onion conveyed their interest in the same 84 acres to Celia C. Onion (wife of James Onion) in 1876. (16)

By drawing up the boundary lines from the 1876 deed, it is clear that the 84 acres fit into the outlines of the old "Fortune" tract that was renamed "Onion's Inheritance" and follows its most obvious lines. The shape of "Fortune" was platted onto William B. Marye's map of early land surveys in the Gunpowder Forks region; the same shape survived into modern times and can be identified on Tax Map 64 which shows that three modern properties fit together to form the 84-acre "Fortune" configuration (Parcels P599, P112, and P477 on which the house stands).

In another move, John W. Onion took sole ownership in 1877 from James H. and Celia C. Onion. That year the G.M. Hopkins atlas showed the house with the notation "J.W. Onion". (17)

John W. Onion mortgaged the property to Elisha Wheeler, and in 1896 when the mortgage had passed to Charles M. Foster, a suit was brought to sell the property, Onion having died in the meanwhile. (18) The long Onion ownership (151 years) was about to end. The trustee in the proceedings advertised the property, giving the first good reference to a large house:

TRUSTEE'S SALE
OF
A GOOD FARM,
Eleventh District Baltimore County.

By virtue of a decree of the Circuit Court for Baltimore County, passed in the equity case of Charles H. Foster-vs-Wm. F. A. Foster, Martha G. Foster, Martha G. Pridham, and others, on the 27th day of June, 1896, the undersigned, the trustee named in said decree to make sale of the property decreed to be sold, will sell at public sale, on the premises, on

Saturday, November 7th,
At 2 o'clock P.M.
ALL THAT FARM

upon which John W. Onion, in his lifetime resided, it being in the 11th district of Baltimore County, and located on the road leading from Franklinville to Bradshaw Station on the B. & O. R.R., adjoining the lands of Messrs. Reynolds, Doyle, Corbin, and others, abut a mile and a quarter from Bradshaw Station and near the Baltimore and Havre de Grace Turnpike Road. The farm contains

EIGHTY-FOUR ACRES OF LAND,

more or less, is in a good and improving neighborhood, is in a fair state of cultivation, and is improved by a

GOOD, SUBSTANTIAL DWELLING,

Stabling, and all necessary farm buildings, well watered, with Fruit and other advantages for a comfortable home.

Terms of sale--

JOHN L. LONGNECKER, Trustee

JAS. L. NORWOOD, Auct.
Oct 17-ts

(19)

Charles M. Foster bid on the house at the auction on November 7, 1896, and late the next year sold all 84 acres to George M. Stout who conveyed the same day to Benjamin M. Cross. (20) A year later, Cross conveyed it back to Charles H. Foster. (21)

Following a lawsuit among the Foster heirs, Edward Reynolds, a Franklinville landowner, bought the place in 1912. (22) Reynolds, who had a splendid house called "Sherwood" on Franklinville Road, sold in 1913 to Dr. Edward P. Brown, who acquired only 44.7 acres. (23)

Dr. Brown was found in the 1918 tax ledger with:

45 a. on rd from Joppa rd to Franklinville
adj Dr. Hamman on e.

10 a. tillable @ \$60
35 a. wood \$30

House 21 x 45 \$2486
16 x 20

Other Bldg \$ 150 (24) f.413

Dr. Brown and his wife sold in 1930 to Harvey K. and Katherine L. Gorsuch, and in 1967, Mrs. Gorsuch, a widow, since 1935, sold to the present owner and other relatives. (25) 4743:172

None of the accumulated evidence suggests a date for the stone part of the house. Its style suggests that it is pre-Victorian and similar to houses of the Western Run Valley. It seems possible that it was built for Mrs. Elizabeth Onion between the 1823 tax list and the jump in the value of improvements on the property to \$400 by 1833. The founder of the family, Stephen Onion, has an 18th century tombstone in the St. John's, Kingsville, cemetery, but he was not originally interred there. Mrs. Edith Gorsuch Onion wrote in 1973, "My father, Thomas Bosley Gorsuch, and his brother, Edwin, brought the tombstone and bones from Joppa, the original location of St. John's Church to its present site." (26)

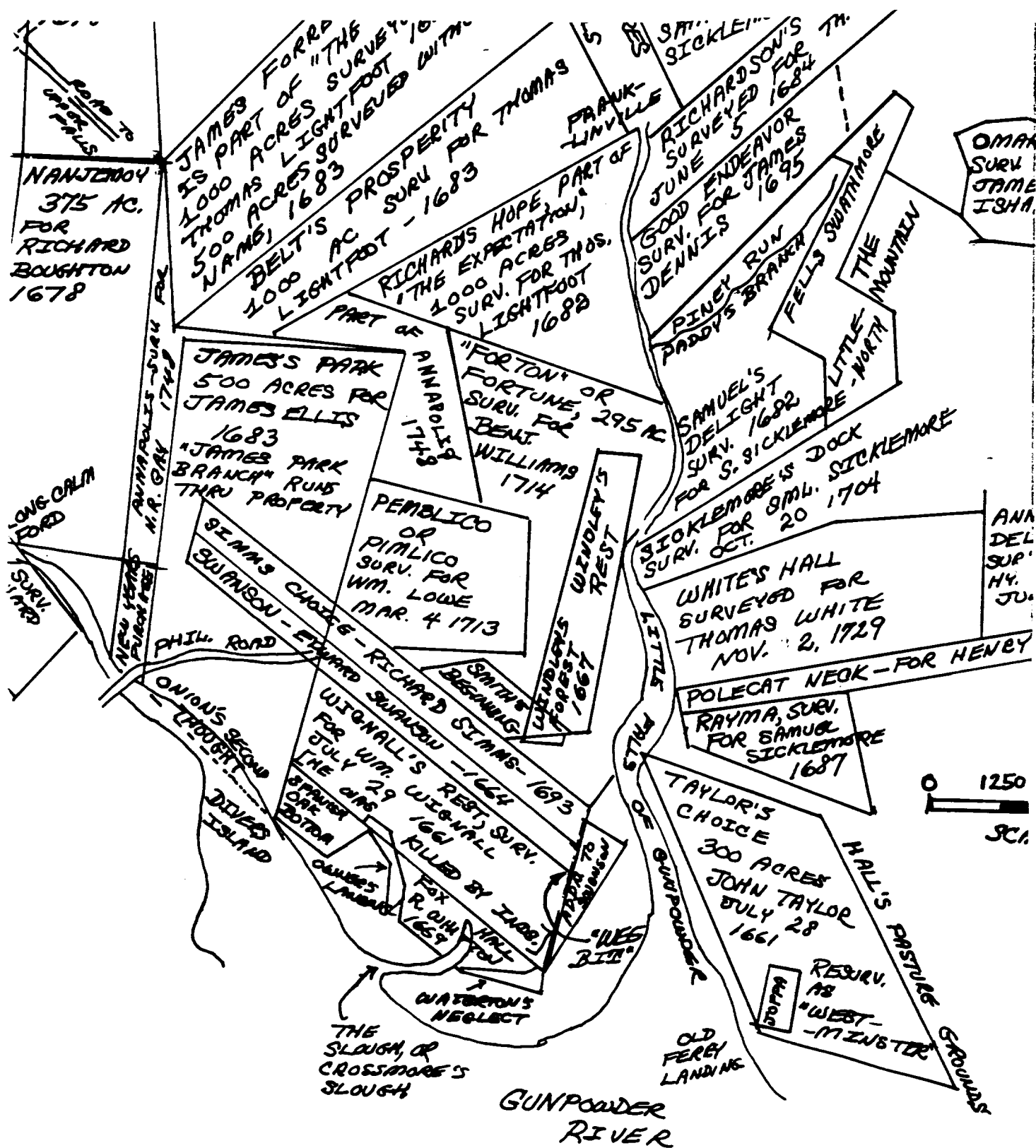
NOTES:

1. Federal Direct Tax List, Baltimore County, 1798, Gunpowder Upper Hundred, Entry #1581, #1830, microfilm, Office of Planning.
2. Stephen Onion tombstone, St. John's P.E. Church, Kingsville. Stephen Onion to Charles Carroll of Annapolis, November 19, 1737, Carroll-McCubbin Papers, MS. 219, Maryland Historical Society.
3. William B. Marye, "A Tract or Land Patent Map of the Fork of the Gunpowder River", 1958, MS., photostat in Office of Planning.

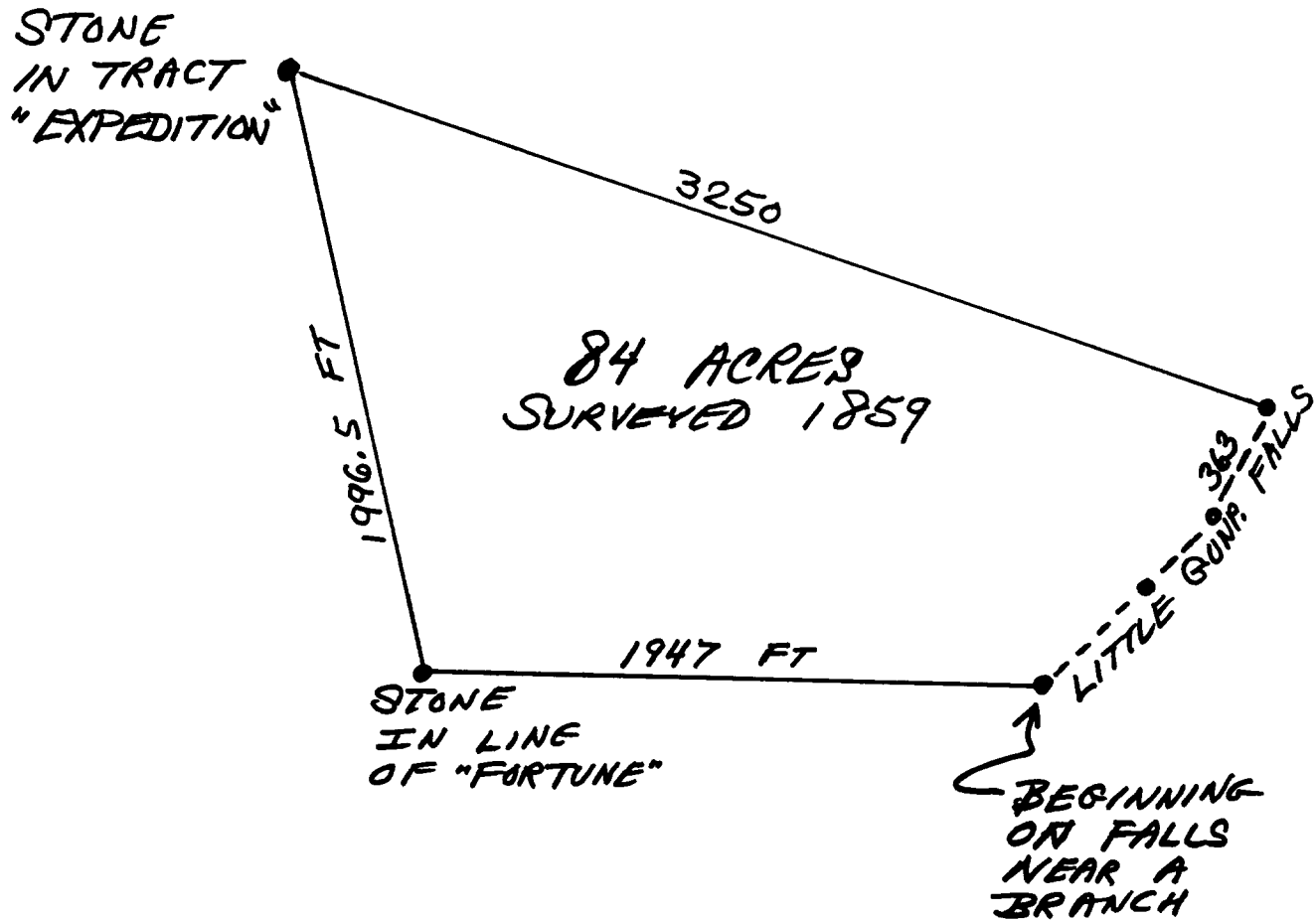
4. Annapolis Maryland Gazette, March 24, 1746.
5. Maryland Gazette, September 6, 1749.
6. Maryland Gazette, August 29, 1754. Also, F. Edward Wright, Inhabitants of Baltimore County, 1692-1763 (Baltimore, 1987), p. 54.
7. Maryland Wills, 29:174.
8. Maryland Gazette, August 17, 1769.
9. Marye, "A Tract Map", 1958.
10. Baltimore Maryland Journal, January 15, 1782.
11. Baltimore County Tax List, 1783, Gunpowder Upper Hundred, reprint in Baltimore County Public Library, Towson.
12. Federal Direct Tax List, op. cit. This was William Francis Heath Onion.
13. Baltimore County Assessments, 1813, 1823, 1833, Assessor's Field Book 1819, Old District 4. Hall of Records, Annapolis.
14. B.C. Wills DMP 17:298. Baltimore Sun, May 17, 1839.
15. B.C. Deeds, JHL 41:484.
16. B.C. Deeds, JB 95:493.
17. B.C. Deeds, JB 101:470.
18. B.C. Judicial Records, LMB 161:100.
19. Towson Maryland Journal, October 24, 1896.
20. B.C. Deeds, NBM 226:404; NBM 229:272, 273.
21. B.C. Deeds, NBM 271:381.
22. B.C. Deeds, WPC 410:7.
23. B.C. Deeds, WPC 421:137.
24. B.C. Tax Ledger, District 11, 1918, f. 413, Records Management Office, Yellow Brick Road, Rosedale.
25. B.C. Deeds, LMCLM 864:259. Also, OTG 4743:172.
26. Edith Gorsuch Onion to J. W. McGrain, July 1973.

ONION.SIG/TXTMJM

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William B. Marye's 1958 reconstruction of colonial surveys. See tract "Fortune," which was resurveyed in 1745 into Onion's Inheritance."



LINES IN DEED OF 1876,
JOHN W. & MARY B. ONION
TO CELIA C. ONION, JB 95:493

MHT Inventory No.:

☐ See continuation sheet

Record # _____

D

☐ See continuation sheet☐ See continuation sheet

name/title	John McGrain	
organization	Office of Planning	date August 3, 1990
street & number	401 Bosley Avenue	telephone 887-3211